



ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT

MINUTES

Board of Directors & Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

VIRTUAL MEETING

Zoom webinar <https://actransit.zoom.us/j/97376351812>

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Phone (669) 900 6833

Webinar ID 973-7635-1812

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

JOE WALLACE, PRESIDENT (WARD 1)

ELSA ORTIZ, VICE PRESIDENT (WARD 3)

GREG HARPER (WARD 2)

MARK WILLIAMS (WARD 4)

DIANE SHAW (WARD 5)

H. E. CHRISTIAN PEEPLES (AT-LARGE)

JOEL YOUNG (AT-LARGE)

MEMBERS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

PAMELA FADEM, CHAIR

**JANET ABELSON, DON QUEEN, MARY CLUTTS, ERIKA BRUHNS,
BARBARA WILLIAMS, JAMES ROBSON, CHONITA CHEW, JONATHAN ELKUS, SANDRA
JOHNSON, MELISSA GETZ, SHAWN FONG, TANYA WASHINGTON, HALE ZUKAS**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District Board of Directors held a joint meeting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.

At 1:05 p.m., Director Shaw (Chairing as the Liaison Representative to the AAC) and Chair Fadem called the joint meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

AC Transit Board Members Present: Harper, Shaw, Peeples, Young, Ortiz, Wallace
Absent: Williams

ACC Members Present: Janet Abelson, Don Queen, Mary Clutts, Erika Bruhns, Barbara Williams, James Robson, Chonita Chew, Jonathan Elkus, Melissa Getz, Pamela Fadem

Absent: Sandra Johnson, Shawn Fong, Tanya Washington, Hale Zukas

Staff for the District:

Michael A. Hursh, General Manager

Jill A. Sprague, General Counsel

Linda A. Nemeroff, District Secretary

Staff for the Accessibility Advisory Committee:

Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager

Kimberly Ridgeway, Accessible Services Specialist

Tammy Kylo, Secretary to the Committee

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Roland Wong commented that he was happy to attend the meeting and was a frequent rider of Line 99.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

4.A. District financial update.

20-332

Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer Chris Andrichak gave the District financial update, including an overview of revenues, expenses and future

trends. Member Chew advised of her involvement in advocacy efforts for CARES Act funds and wanted to know how the District planned to spend the money. Mr. Andrichak responded that the funds are being used for labor costs and personal protective equipment for workers and, going forward, for riders. General Manager Michael Hursh advised that the safety of operators and passengers was a priority for AC Transit. AC Transit was keeping people employed and service on the street. Mr. Hursh thanked Ms. Chew for her advocacy.

Member Abelson asked at what point the Coronavirus would have a severe impact on service. Mr. Hursh responded that service impacts are evaluated daily, and the budget will be much tighter in FY 2021-22. He added that the availability of a vaccine was pivotal, and the District continues to advocate for more state and federal money.

Member Abelson asked what the criteria would be for reducing service in the future. Mr. Hursh advised that staff continues to study the service, and the AAC would be involved in the process as would the public.

Chair Fadem thanked AC Transit for keeping drivers employed. She also pointed out that the AAC members are an important asset for the District and should be used to advocate in support AC Transit's initiatives and pursuit of additional funding. She also commented that free fares were important to riders who are hurting financially during the pandemic.

Member Clutts was concerned that fares would take a bigger hit than normal and wanted to know the worst-case scenario and if Transbay fares had taken a bigger hit. Mr. Andrichak advised that fares, in general, represented 13-15% of the revenue, but could be made up by other funding sources. Director of Service Development and Planning Robert del Rosario added that Transbay service initially dropped by 96% and the District is currently carrying approximately 1,000 riders per day now.

Ms. Clutts asked if it was true that Transbay ridership represented more of the fare revenue than local service. Mr. Andrichak advised that Transbay fares represented 20% of total fares during normal times. Director Peebles advised that there was a weekly ridership report that could be distributed to the AAC members. Chair Fadem requested that the Committee Secretary coordinate with staff to get this information to the AAC.

Member Bruhns asked if there was a plan to keep paratransit service afloat during the pandemic. Accessible Services Manager Mallory Brush advised that there is a recovery plan for paratransit as well as a plan to keep drivers employed. She added that there is a savings to the District when the service is not operating. Director Peeples commented that paratransit drivers were delivering meals through Meals on Wheels to keep the workforce engaged. Member Abelson thanked AC Transit and BART for providing meal delivery services and for prioritizing people over profit.

Public Comment:

Joshua asked if there was any information on how to find additional funding to avoid service cuts.

No action was taken. The item was presented for information only.

4.B. Emergency service levels.

20-319

Director of Service Development and Planning Robert del Rosario gave an update on emergency service levels.

Member Chew asked about the suspension of Line 80 and whether staff was aware that it stopped at four senior centers from Berkeley to El Cerrito. Mr. del Rosario advised that Line 80 had the lowest productivity in the service network and resources from that line needed to be re-deployed on lines that needed additional buses to relieve overcrowding. Ms. Chew suggested that the District add a Flex bus to provide some sort of service to seniors who needed it.

President Wallace asked if staff was keeping an eye on overcrowding on the 800 service, noting it was a lifeline service. Mr. del Rosario assured the Board and AAC Members that staff would keep track of ridership on this line.

Member Bruhns asked how far in advance the public is notified of service cancellations due to deep cleaning of an operating division. General Manager Michael Hursh advised that this was a difficult situation that often comes with little or no notice in order to protect other operators at the division and passengers. He further advised that we would like to be

able to provide more notice and apologized for the inconvenience to riders.

Member Williams commented on capacity issues on Line 40, saying that she had to resort to Uber to get where she needed to go.

Director Shaw asked when the app that reports load capacity would be available to the public. Chief Information Officer Ahsan Baig advised that the app was still in the testing phase with public launch scheduled for the end of October.

Public Comment:

Sheela Gunn-Cushman wanted to make sure that drop off only signs were audibly accessible for the blind. It was further stated that some bus operators do not open the front doors for intending passengers with or without a visual impairment.

In response to public comment, Mr. del Rosario responded that the drop off only function was a manual process whereby the operator notifies the control center that the bus is at capacity in order to update the head sign. He added that he was unsure if there was a way to coordinate the head sign with the announcement at the door but would investigate it. Chair Fadem requested that staff advise operators of the need to let blind passengers board at the front of the bus because it is safer and they could hear the automated voice announcements. Mr. del Rosario advised that he would relay the information to operations staff.

Accessible Services Manager Mallory Brush advised that the full load policy had not changed due to COVID, and that operators were required to stop the bus and let impending passengers know the bus was full and when the next bus was arriving rather than pass them up.

No action was taken. The item was presented for information only.

4.C. Fare collection during pandemic. (verbal)

20-316

Director of Service Development and Planning Robert del Rosario gave an update on the status of fare collection, saying that it was suspended in March for safety reasons. He added that the resumption of fares was

dependent on the installation of operator shields and various approvals.

Member Abelson asked about the idea of free fares and whether the District had considered the possibility of making the service fare free permanently. General Manager Michael Hursh advised that staff was studying this before the pandemic, and it was a \$60-70 million revenue problem. He added that the current service wasn't necessarily fare free as the District is using the CARES Act to make up the loss of revenue.

Member Getz asked if operator shields would inhibit their ability to secure wheelchairs. Mr. Hursh responded that the barrier does not preclude the operator from assisting those customers who need assistance. He added that the District was in the process of installing mask and hand sanitizer dispensers on all buses.

Public Comment:

Joshua commented that he has been using public transit during the pandemic and affirmed that it has been beneficial to riders not to have to pay the fare.

No action was taken. The item was presented for information only.

4.D. Update on the Tempo (BRT) service. (verbal)

20-315

Chief Operating Officer Salvador Llamas presented an update on the launch of the Tempo (Line 1T) service as well as an overview of the buses, signage, passenger amenities, and performance. He also addressed capacity limits and ridership numbers saying that each bus was limited to 16 passengers due to social distancing. Tempo has been experiencing full loads since the launch of the service on August 9th.

Member Chew asked if there were people along the route to assist seniors with wayfinding, etc. Mr. Llamas reported that ambassadors are readily available to assist passengers in navigating the system as well as a community outreach team and road supervisors.

Member Williams asked if bus operators had provided any feedback on the new service. Mr. Llamas advised that AC Transit has the best operators in the industry and they know how to react and respond to situations they

encounter on the corridor. He added that the dedicated bus lane is a benefit to operators and there are enforcement measures in place to keep automobiles out of the lane. He also mentioned that docking the bus was a more challenging aspect of the job.

Public Comment:

Sheela Gunn Cushman commented that she liked the old bus service better than BRT because mid-street platforms were a concern. Also a concern was the fact that the customer service call center is in Iowa. It was pointed out that more information was needed to make riders with disabilities feel comfortable.

No action was taken. The item was presented for information only.

- 4.E.** Expanding the term for AAC Committee members from one year to **20-318** two years, and limit membership to persons living within the geographic boundaries of the District. (verbal)

District Secretary Linda Nemeroff proposed lengthening the terms for AAC members from one year to two and restricting membership to people who live within the geographic boundaries of the District. With regard to the recruitment of new members, Ms. Nemeroff advised that staff is considering an ongoing recruitment campaign with a more robust recruitment effort every two years.

President Wallace supported the idea of extending the terms to two years because it takes time for Committee members to acclimate. Chair Fadem agreed, saying that it took time to learn transit terminology.

Chair Fadem questioned the restriction on membership to people living within the boundaries of the District, saying that she thought this was already the case. Ms. Nemeroff advised that the District's "service area" and jurisdictional boundary were once interchangeable, but because the District now serves several areas outside of its boundaries, it was important to make a distinction.

Member Getz supported a two-year term, especially since so many meetings were cancelled this year.

Member Chew asked if it made a difference which ward she lived in. Ms. Nemeroff responded that while it's usually best to have an appointee align with the ward of the Board member appointing them, it isn't required.

Director Peeples felt a two-year term made sense and allowed Committee members to learn the terminology.

Member Williams was in agreement with extending the term to years, suggesting that the Committee combine efforts with other agencies. Accessible Service Manager Mallory Brush felt the Committee should agendaize meetings with outside agencies for its next meeting, adding that any activities the AAC embarks on must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Public Comment:

Sheela Gunn Cushman agreed with extending the terms, but strongly believed that members should be appointed by the Board member for their area. It was also suggested that people who work within the District be eligible for appointment to the Committee.

No action was taken. The item was presented for feedback on proposed changes to terms and membership on the AAC.

5. BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

(Government Code Section 54954.2)

Members of the Board and Committee offered the following comments:

Director Harper expressed his appreciation to the AAC members for the valuable input they offer and suggested holding the joint meeting twice a year.

President Wallace agreed with Director Harper and thanked the AAC for the work and input they provide in helping to improve the District's service.

Director Shaw was hopeful that the AAC members could experience the new Tempo service and looked forward to hearing their feedback about the service.

Chair Fadem thanked the Board for holding the joint meeting and was pleased

that the General Manager was able to attend the meeting as well. She further commented on how well the service is being operated in light of the pandemic.

Member Chew invited everyone to the Healthy Living Festival hosted by the United Seniors of Oakland.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Linda A. Nemeroff
District Secretary